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SOME NOTES ON TJOPI ORIGINS

By HENRI PHILIPPE JUNOD

Missão Suissa, Manjacaze

I. NAME

THE so-called "Tjopi" tribe (Batchopi) belongs to the Bantu family of people and is but a very small group amongst the Zulu, Suto, or Thonga tribes in South Africa. It is, however, a well-defined social entity in the present state of things. The name "Vatjopi" comes from the Zulu word *ku tjopa*, which means "to draw the bow", and does not seem to be a very old one. The Shangaan (or Thonga) clans which were under the domination of Zulu potentates during the last century were sent by their rulers to bring into submission all the people scattered in the great country comprised between the Limpopo River, the sea, and the actual southern part of the Inhambane district. They made there several incursions, and met with a different race with peculiar features, very brave and audacious, and whose weapon was the great bow, which is still to be found nowadays, and was more deadly than the Zulu assagais. Thence the appellation of "Vatjopi": those who draw the bow. This term seems to be well known since the time of "Manukosi" or "Sotjangani", the first great Ngoni conqueror of the Thonga clans established in the Nkomati and Limpopo valleys (1820-59). In the great fights of the period of Gungunyana (1889-95) the Vatjopi struggled as well as they could. They were still using their national weapon with poisoned arrows, and in their strong blockhouses, resisted a long time, before being compelled to flee by the great number of their assailants. As a matter of fact, they were never really defeated, but, outnumbered, were bound to withdraw further east and north.

Like the Indians of North America, the Tjopi tribe is under the mark of the bow. Like them it seems to be more and more disappearing before the advance of white civilization, and the encroachment of other Bantu tribes, which have their languages actually written, the Vatswa and the Vathonga (two groups of the same tribe).

The Tjopi people, being a very small social unit, not having their tongue written, will probably disappear in the more or less near future. It is the aim of the present paper, and of some others to be published

later, to save from total disappearance something of its originality and ethnological features, and especially something about its so disputable origins.

II. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Geographically, the Vatsopi are almost entirely located in the territory situated between the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth degrees latitude south, and the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth degrees longitude east (Greenwich), that is to say, between the low Limpopo River on the south and west, the sea on the south and east, and the Inharrime River on the north. Following the wars and the different invasions of foreign elements into Tjopiland, numerous clans were broken up and scattered amongst the Thonga tribe. These Tjopi remnants are especially to be found in the territory of "Vilanculos" (a Portuguese way of writing the old Tjopi *shibongo* or family name Vilankulu), north of Inhambane, where the Tjopi-speaking people seem to be very numerous. But the writer was unable to get reliable information on that point. Some other elements of the ancient tribe fled to the south, and they are to be found near the Nkomati River, around the Manyisa administration, and in the territory of Mwamba. However important these "Vatsopi of the dispersion" might be, there is no doubt that the true "habitat" of the Tjopi tribe is within the bonds of the three Portuguese administrations of Chaichai (alias Vila Nova de Gaza), Manjacaze, and Zavala.

We must clearly explain, to begin with, that the so-called Tjopiland is ethnologically divided into two principal groups of inhabitants. These are not clans, but different groups of people, having some similarities, but widely distinct in language and even in some features of their respective customs: namely the "Valenge" and the "true Vatsopi".

(a) *Valenge*

The Valenge (those who come from the north) occupy the territory situated on the Chaichai circumscription, and get as far as the administrative post of Jidengela on the Manjacaze circumscription. They are a very peculiar people. They are so mixed up with Thonga or Shangaan-speaking people, so intricate is the respective position of the Tjopi and the Thonga elements amongst them, that there is sometimes no possibility at all to ascertain which is which. If we still explain that a very numerous proportion of Vandzau clans are scattered amongst

them, it will be clearly understood that these Valenge cannot be counted as true types of the TŢopi-speaking people, and that even their customs cannot be relied upon as specifically authentic of the TŢopi tribe. In this respect we must say that Bishop Smythe's *Xilenge Grammar* (S.P.C.K., 1902, London) has proved a little confusing. *filenge* is not "the language of the people commonly called Chopi", but a kind of combination of TŢopi and Thonga. The difference between *filenge* and TŢitŢopi will be easily demonstrated by one or two examples of the respective vocabulary of these two different ways of speaking.

In *filenge* the word "tooth, teeth" is expressed by the word *d'ino, mano* (class *d'i-ma* with the peculiar alveolar implosive *d'*). Every student aware of the Thonga language will see at once the close relationship of that word with the Thonga one *tinyo, matinyo*, or *meno*, whereas the TŢopi word for tooth is an altogether different one, *d'ikwasa, makwasa*. Other examples: *filenge*: *mundu, vandu*, the man; *jithonga*: *munhu vanhu*; TŢitŢopi: *mithu vanthu*, with a very sensible aspirated *h*; *filenge*: *nyakulori*, my friend; *jithonga*: *nakulori*; TŢitŢopi: *mpoalawangu* ($\sigma = \text{ŝ}$ sibilant of the Thonga).

The examples might be multiplied, but it would push the distinction too far, because in many instances we find a great similarity between *filenge* and TŢitŢopi, and even in true TŢitŢopi we shall often trace the Thonga influence very far. However, there is no doubt in the writer's mind that *filenge* has become almost a mixture of *jithonga* and TŢitŢopi. The reason of this interpenetration of the two languages which created the *filenge* and is also working in true TŢopiland is easily explained by the fact that a great number of the actual ValŢopi are of undoubted Thonga origin (cf. historical data). If we follow the linguistic distinction which I tried to show just now, we shall be able to recognize at once if we have to deal with a *Mlenge* or *MtŢopi* informant—and therefore it seems to be the best way of discrimination. I deal somewhat in detail with this subject, because of the confusion which Bishop Smythe's grammar is bound to bring into every Bantuist's ideas, not forgetting, however, that his work opened the way to students of the TŢopi people.

The Valenge are all under chiefs belonging to the "Langa" clan, except those in the territory of the "Regulo"¹ TŢihatu, "who is given the salutation *d'i tŢite Ng'umayo*, and seems Thonga by origin. Their actual Regulos (headchiefs): Nyafoko, Mahumani, Makupulani, and Nkandze, are all given the salutation *d'i tŢite, Langa*! the sun has

¹ For us, Regulo = headchief; chefe = headman.

got up, Langa! These Langa people are probably of Zulu origin, as we shall see further on. There is perhaps a relation between their name and the term Valenge, but the writer was unable to get any good information on that particular point. Of course, there are many other clans amongst the Valenge, but the Langa clan is predominant amongst them.

If we give a rather dry list of the actual "Regulos" (headchiefs) and "chefes" (headman), we find the following names:—

1. *Regulo Tsihaḽu*.—Chefes: Nyampfumu, Nyankhumbu, Khundule, Tjileva, Nyathembwe, Nyampheke, Mthethe, Tjiluvanyana.

2. *Regulo Nyafoko*.—Chefes: Makonyani, Bilanyani, Mukodwani, Tjithembe, Mafange.

3. *Regulo Mahumani*.—Chefes: Mafumisani, Jagwala, Ntsambi, Mphimula, Khondzo, Mbowowo. In this territory we find an exceptional number of true Thonga elements.

4. *Regulo Makupulani*.—Chefes: Nyambende, Nyankhale, Nkhukhu, Mungoyi, Tjikokololo, Malembe, Nyankhokho, Tjilumbela.

5. *Regulo Nkandze* and his chefes on the border of the sea. He has to be differentiated from the Nkandze, which is to be found in true Tjopiland, but both are "Langa" people.

The country of the Valenge is well populated, and with the very interesting contributions of Miss E. Dora Earthy, of the Church of England Mission at Masiyeni, it is becoming better known. Of course one has to say that the ethnological facts available there are of great value, but must not be put under the heading of the true Tjopi tribe. It is quite obvious that the Thonga influence there is too great nowadays to allow the ethnological features of the Valenge customs to remain pure.

B. The True Vatsjopi

The true Vatsjopi occupy the region comprised between the Thonga people of Matsinye¹—the Valenge and the Vatswa as well as the Vataka on the northern border of the Inharrime River. The frontier between the Valenge and the Vatsjopi is approximately a line drawn from Jidengela up to the Manjacaze administration. They are more numerous than the Valenge and have a distinct tribal unity as well as

¹ For those interested in Thonga studies it might be interesting to notice that this Matsinye people are "Vaka Tembe" by origin and are still given the salutation: "Jewani, Tembe!" They have come into Gazaland from the country of the Baronga in the remote past.

a language and customs "suigeneris". I shall try to give an outline of the grammar of their interesting tongue and an account of some of their peculiar customs in further papers.

The actual TŢopi Regulos belong to two big clans, one Thonga by origin, the other Bvesha. The Regulos Mungwambe, Mbandze, Zandzamela, Nyamtumbu, Mavila, and Mange are "Valoyi" people, that is to say, Thonga by origin (cf. historical data). Zavala, TŢisiku, Nyakutowo, TŢilundzu, TŢipwale, Mwani, and Mhindzu are "Thovele" people or Bvesha by origin (cf. historical data). Some remnants of the old TŢopi inhabitants are still to be found, but they are very rare. Here is the list of the Regulos and chiefs of the VatŢopi.

1. *Regulo Mbandze* and his chiefs.

2. *Regulo Mungwambe* and his chiefs.

3. *Regulo Madendere* and his chiefs.

4. *Regulo Nyamtumbu*.—Chefes: Magambu, Masangu, Marihani, Ndengu, Mtani.

5. *Regulo Zandzamela*.—Chefes: Mpharuke, Buse, Mbilani, Mawundze, Mavume, TŢimbutsoni, Maveluna.

6. *Regulo Mavila*.—Chefes: Matanato, Ntowo, Nyakuwonga, Gume.

7. *Regulo Mbanguze*.—Chefes: Makuluve, Mahandzule, Mange, Mbihe, Nyamwende.

These seven Regulos are *Valoyi* by origin.

8. *Regulo Nkandze* (who is a Langa).—Chefes: Guni, Mbangule, TŢibvondzo, Matoti, Mathimbi, Khwambe, Mungwambe, Muruku.

The following Regulos are "Thovele" people or Babvesha by origin:—

9. *Regulo Zavala* or Gumundu. —Chefes: Mayita, Matimela, Nyambene, dŵunye, Mangwengwe, Matono, TŢisambula, and Goma.

10. *Regulos TŢisiku*.—Chefes: Khavele, dŵakalu, Masava, Mawundze, Mbande, Nyoko, Makaringe, Nyabawu, Madŵya, Mangombe, TŢikohe, Mahema, Matandane, Khumbane.

11. *Regulo Mhindzu*.—Chefes: Kundze, Khukhwini, Bula, Mlayi, TŢipindu.

12. *Regulo Nyakutowo* and his chiefs.

13. *Regulo TŢilundzu*.—Chefes: Mungwambe, Thithi, dŵevese, Masama, Guleni, Heleni, Nyankhundela, TŢitsulsta, Lendalenda, Sumbani.

14. *Regulo TŢipwale*.—Chefes: Nyamphalele, Nyamadzeho.

15. *Regulo Mwani*.—Chefes: Gungulu and Makovela.

On the northern border of the Inharrime River Tfitfopi is still spoken but the clans are mixed up with Vatoka or Vatonga elements as well as Vatswa groups of the Thonga tribe. It is obvious that the Tfopi tribe is very small (about 100,000–150,000 souls), but it is an exceedingly interesting one, being altogether different from the surrounding groups of Bantu peoples, even though the influence of these groups is easily recognizable in many ways. As the writer was unable to ascertain the situation further than the Inharrime River, we shall depend on other contributors to know accurately what is the respective situation of the different clans of Vatoka, Vatswa, and Vatsfopi, south of Inhambane.

III. HISTORICAL DATA

It is somewhat a riddle every student of native history has to face. No historical records have, of course, been written, and the only source available is through the memory of old people, which civilization and drink are lessening more and more. The difficulty of ascertaining the truth in historical questions amongst primitive people is very great at the present day. White civilization is slowly but surely disintegrating the native tribe, its customs, its stability, its ethics, however low they might be—and alcoholic intoxication is spoiling the primitive's mental capacities more and more every day, as well as his health and heart. Therefore, I do not think that the facts which I shall try to describe here can be called scientific, because no scientific accuracy can be attained in the present state of things. However, old people are still to be found, and corroborating their answers in the different clans should give as accurate an approximation to historical facts as it is possible to attain.

(a) *The Old Tfopi Nucleus*

The student of Tfopi problems, when he endeavours to understand the past history of the tribe, is most puzzled at first by the fact that the old inhabitants of the country, the true Tfopi people, have almost completely disappeared. When investigating amongst old people, asking "Who were your parents? Where do you come from?" he almost invariably receives the answer: "I am a Thovele, a Bvesha by origin, or a Muloyi, a Thonga, or, again, a Langa or Zulu by origin." As it used to be an insult to be called *mtfopi*, and the people were ashamed of this appellation, the writer first thought that these answers were a way of denying their true origin. But after some years of careful

investigation he had to realize that, in fact, the old Tfopi nucleus of the tribe has almost completely disappeared. They had to flee before foreign invaders or to submit to them, but overcame them on language and in many points of customs and manners, probably because of the necessity of intermarriage.

The old Tfopi nucleus of the tribe seems to have been formed by two big clans: *Nkumbe* and *Vilankulu*. Investigation about these peoples is difficult. Almost invariably the answer is: "It is too old, we do not know." However, some data are available. *Nkumbe* seems to have come from the north, and to have been in relationship with people of the Inhambane and northern regions. *Vilankulu*, on the contrary, seems to have come from the west and south, and to have had some relationship with the Thonga tribe.

When Gwambe (see further on) and his people came into Tfopiland, they easily subdued the ancient inhabitants. These were known at Zavala by the name of *Mrori*, whose other name was *Marambe*. *Mrori* belonged to the *Vilankulu* people, and occupied the country with his two brothers: *Nyandombwe* and *Tjimime*. They had their peculiar custom and language (something like the "Urtfopi"). They were the masters of the "timbila" or "mihambi", the native pianos; this most interesting and precious musical instrument, which can be therefore counted amongst the true Tfopi characteristics. In another place I shall endeavour to give some considerations concerning the way in which it is made and played, as well as the customs connected with it. *Mrori* was also the master of the "tsibvenyula" or "mintfalu", those loin-clothes cleverly made out of the bark of the "mphayi" or "utfalu" tree of the "ficus" family (a near brother to the *mphama* of the Baronga). I shall describe this interesting work later on. *Mrori* did know also these curious body markings or tattooings which have been described by Miss E. Dora Earchy in the *South African Journal of Science*. However, on that point my informants told me that in ancient times these tattooings were far less extensive than in modern times and that they were more and more enlarged, becoming more and more "fashionable". As to the circumcision rites and the marginal rites of women, which need a thorough and very careful description because of the people trying to mislead or induce the student in many ways, the people in Tfopiland and amongst the Valenge are very affirmative, these customs were unknown to *Vilankulu* and *Nkumbe*. They came with Gwambe and are a *Bvesha* feature or custom, imposed upon the old inhabitants by their *Bvesha* rulers.

In the *Nyamtumbu* (Thonga : *Nyantsumbu*) region, the Valoyi or Thonga invaders found *Thama* (or *Mthama*), who belonged to the Nkumbe people. With him were Thembe (a distinct Tjopi word meaning the "field"), Tuni, and Mbula. Thama fled before the invaders and settled near the Gwambe people at Zavala. As Mrori, Thama did not know the actual terror of the witchcraft ideas, knew the timbila and the tsibvenyula, and the tattoo marks or "titsanga" ("the reeds" as they are cut into the skin with sharpened reeds), or "tindova", a tattoo name which describes especially the extensive tattooing which women practise on their bellies. Thama as well as Mrori used to hunt the numerous elephants of his country. He killed them by digging enormous holes in the ground or "maphala" (class *ḡi-ma*). In those holes he planted a big pole and the huge animal fell in and was impaled during the dark hours of the night. But Thama and Mrori were unable afterwards to cut the meat in a proper way, having no more implements at all, and using only for that purpose sharpened sticks. The Thonga invaders with their iron assagais, easily overcame Nkumbe and Volankulu.

In the Zandzamelu region the invaders found Buke, Bangu, Mlove, Nyamphule, Nyaphimbi, and Nobela. Not having been able to investigate carefully the origin of these clans, the writer will not make any statement on that point, except that Buke seems to have been a clan of the Vilankulu people, and that Nobela was in close relationship with the invaders, and seems to have been the one who brought them into the country.

In the Makupulani region, when Langa arrived, he found *Nyambongo*, who belonged also to the Vilankulu people.

On the whole, we see that the informants in many clans are of one accord in saying that their forefathers, when they got into the country found almost everywhere Vilankulu and Nkambe. These ancient inhabitants had their special customs, (Titsanga, Tsibvenyula, Timbila), and did not know some of the peculiar features of the actual Tjopi tribe (mbutsa or circumcision, tsidungulu or amulets, tsikwemlu or witches, etc.).

(b) *The three great Immigrations of Bvesha, Thonga (Shangaan), and Zulu Clans*

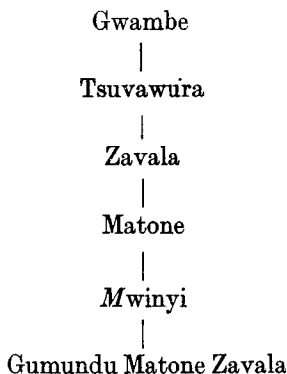
As I said above, the remnants of the old true Tjopi people are but few, and nowadays they have been absorbed by different elements. I have already emphasized the difficulty of obtaining reliable

information. But, however, after having seen a good many informants in several clans of the TŢopi-speaking people, the writer thinks it possible to state clearly that the actual TŢopi tribe is formed by three great groups of people who invaded the country and subdued the first occupants, Nkumbe and Vilankulu. They came into TŢopiland in the remote past, and seem to have arrived almost simultaneously.

(1) The Bvesha Invaders

In the beginning of the eighteenth century there seems to have taken place an important migration of the peoples dwelling on the high plains of the Transvaal as well as in Swaziland and Zululand. These peoples, who seem to have been in the " hunting stage " of human society, were following the big game down to the plains of Portuguese East Africa, on the border of the Nkomati and the Limpopo Rivers. They were especially keen on elephants. White people were already established in the harbours at Delagoa Bay and Inhambane, and ivory was for native people the best way and the quickest of getting money, hoes, clothes for their lobolos, or any iron to melt their own weapons.

The first clans to arrive in TŢopiland belonged to the Bvesha people of Modzadzgi; they had left their kraals in the Spelonken, and were led by their chief, whose name was Gwambe.¹ My informant on the matter, Gumundu, who is a great-grandson of Gwambe, gave me the following genealogy of his forefathers from Gwambe :—



¹ This Gwambe must have been remembered by the Bvesha people, who called his offsprings, when they returned to Spelonken in 1863, " Magwamba." A great number amongst them had the extensive tattoos which old TŢopi people used to practise on the nose and cheeks down to the chin, the reason for which they were called " Knobneusen " by the Dutch people.

Gumundu is a very old man. He saw Manukosi's death as a small child (1859). We see therefore that Gwambe must have come into the country a long time ago. If we take an average of thirty years for one generation we might infer from five generations that he came in the beginning of the eighteenth century. This Gwambe belonged to the clan of "Thovsele", and still now his great-grandson is given the salutation *di tšite, Thovsele!* (the sun has got up, Thovsele), as well as the other one, *di tšite, Zavala!* As a matter of fact, we cannot rely absolutely on these genealogies, because of the fact that in Tjopiland chieftainship does not pass from father to son, but from brother to brother. It is only when all the brothers of the deceased chief have died that chieftainship returns to his son. However, Gumundu, who is blind, has very well kept the memories of the past, and he affirmed that the names he gave were his true forefathers, and did not make any mistake giving these names from Gwambe down to him or from him up to Gwambe.

Gwambe settled near the Inharrime River at Jikome (terminus of the small railway actually running from Chaŋchaŋ into Gazaland). His son, Tsuvawura went ahead, but the country in which he settled was named after his son Zavala, who subdued the old inhabitants.

Gwambe came with Mhindzu and Tjilundzu who were his people. But further than Zavala they did not find anybody. The country at Tjilundzu and Tjipwale was still covered with great forests and full of big game.

As I said above, this Thovsele people easily overcame Mrori because of the superiority of their iron weapons. Little by little they lost their own tongue and mixed themselves with the old Tjopi people, taking their wives amongst them. They quickly adopted the bow, and, knowing how to melt iron, they learned how to make up iron-headed arrows. They brought with them the circumcision rites of their Bvesha ancestors and imposed them upon Nkumbe and Vilankulu; so did they with the marginal rites of women, of which the ancient inhabitants had no idea. On the other hand, they accepted the body and face tattooing of the old Tjopi people, their timbila or native pianos, their useful loin-clothes—and the actual true Tjopi-speaking people are ethnologically, it seems, the result of the combination of these two elements. A further study on this matter will perhaps show in what way they became interpenetrated, especially if we get a good ethnological description of the Babvesha of Northern Transvaal, a

reliable description of their peculiar customs about circumcision and of the "rites de passage" imposed upon Babvesha women.

Neither Vilankulu nor Gwambe knew very much about witches—witchcraft and possessions. Gwambe, however, seems to have brought with him charms and amulets (*tsidungulu*), which Vilankulu did not know. But witchcraft became predominant in the last century, when the Vandzau people brought by the Vangoni potentates entered into the country, where they are very numerous, even now.

When Gumundu was asked: "Which tongue did Gwambe speak when he entered into the country?" He answered: "He spoke TŢitswa (or TŢithonga), but forgot it quickly and spoke TŢitŢopi." He is probably mistaken, because Gwambe is likely to have spoken ſibvesha.

What seems valuable in this information for those interested in native customs is the fact that circumcision rites do not seem to have been a real "TŢopi" custom of old, but have been imported and imposed upon the people by the Bvesha invaders. This fact is confirmed by the Thonga invaders (cf. further on), who affirm that they did not know it or find it, but that it came from Zavala to the east and south, and was quickly adopted by them—as the marginal rites were accepted by their wives. It is, then, interesting to notice that the rites connected to circumcision and the circumcision itself were not present amongst old TŢopi people as well as amongst old Thonga people. They were imposed upon them or accepted by them in virtue of special circumstances or environment. It might, therefore, be that these customs can be traced more and more to "one" source. As to the linguistic features of the actual TŢopi tongue, it might be also that a relation exists between the arrival of Gwambe's people and the frequent use of the alveolar implosive *ɖ* (cf. *ɖitiko*, class *ɖi-ma*), a sound which is closely akin to the Sesuto *l* or to the ſipedi *ɖ*.

(2) The Thonga Invaders

At the time in which the Bvesha invaders appeared into the country, or just some years after, a certain number of Thonga clans—belonging to the "Valoyi" group of the tribe, began also to leave their kraals near the Libombo mountains, and after having crossed the big plains of the Limpopo, got into TŢopiland. They say they came, like Gwambe hunting elephants. It seems that very long ago they had been preceded by Nobela and his people, who seem to have been dwelling near the Marangwe Lake from remote times.

These Valoyi people, led by *Makunyule* and *Mbandze*, were apparently closely akin to Nobela and they knew something about the country to which they were going. *Makunyule* stopped in the Matsinye region, and being tired he settled there near the plain of Makopa. He is now but a very small chief near to Makupulani's country. His brothers went ahead, and began to settle near the Marangwe Lake. The country was still wild, but, however, they found some of Vilankulu's people there: namely Buke, *Mbilani*, *Mlove*, Bangu, etc. The Thonga hunters began by *khonza* (a Zulu word meaning "acknowledge as a suzerain") these ancient inhabitants. But they quickly noticed that they had no iron weapons, and that their own assagays were more deadly than Vilankulu's wooden arrows. After some time they easily subdued them, made them their slaves, but took their wives amongst them and lost little by little their tongue and many of their Thonga characteristics.

Mbandze stopped just after *Makunyule*, and settled on the south and west of the Marangwe Lake. He begot *Mavila*, who was established as a chief further on, near the Zavala region and Gwambe's people.

Zandzamele settled also, and occupied the country which lies east of the Marangwe Lake. His son *Mbanguze* or *Mange* found his share of the country in the direction of the Inharrime River and Jikome.

Nyamtumbu, or Nyantsumbu, settled near the sea on the hills which border the magnificent "Nyambavale" Lagoon. He found with Thama some Thonga elements which had preceded him there: the *Mtani* people. These had left their kraals amongst the Va Bila, near the Phati Lake, in the Vulombe region. They came, it seems, with the *Mtheths* people, actually established in the Tjihaŋu region. Amongst this *Mtani* people, my informant, Gavasi Mtani, gave the following genealogy of his forefathers:—

Mtani, who was found by Nyamtumbu.
 |
Mambani
 |
Makulani
 |
Matsinye
 |
dikhupe
 |
Matekani
 |
 Gavasi Mtani

And the very old Regulo Tjimangani gave me the following of his:—

Mawayi Nyantsumbu, who came into
| the country and found *Mtani*.
Sikhonela

|
Masindze wa Nyatsengwe

Masindze

Tjimangani,

who is a very old man. He was about six years of age at Manukasi's death.

To give an example of the different clans scattered now in what is considered as true Tfopiland, let us examine all the people of this Nyantsumbu region and their origins. All the following statements were made by Tjimangani Nyantsumbu himself, and these are his subjects: The "Va ka Tjisaki" came from the Bileni region (Limpopo River), and are of Thonga origin; the "Va ka Khawu" came from the Manyisa region, and belonged also to the Thonga tribe; the "Va ka Makhovo", Valoyi thence Thonga origin, came with Mbandze; the "Va ka Manyendze", same origin; the "Va ka Madede" are one with the Thovele people, thence Babvesha by origin; the "Va ka Masangu", also Thonga in origin.

No Vilankulu or Nkumbe people remained, but they were absorbed by the invaders or fled before them.

From these examples one is able to understand at once how difficult it is to get in connexion with true Tfopi elements. They disappeared, but gave to the actual tribe its tongue and numerous outstanding features of its actual customs.

(3) The Zulu Invaders

They are the "Langa" people who led to submission, the ancient inhabitants of the Valenge region. It seems that they came from Zululand a little after the Thonga invaders, and it is said they were also hunting elephants. My informant there, "George Makupulani," who is a clever man and the actual Regulo of the Makapulani country, gave me the following genealogy:—

Zwithi, who lived in Zululand.

|
Siva, *ibid.*

Langa, who came into Tjopiland.

Ngunze

Mpfhotho

Tlandlala

Makupulani

George Makupulani

Some people deny that these Langa people came from Zululand, and, of course, nobody could **affirm** it is a scientific fact. But, however, there seems to be a truth in the assertion of Makupulani, because they came into the country knowing the circumcision and this might be the proof that they had no relations with the Valoyi invaders nor with the old inhabitants who did not know this custom. As I said above, Nyafoko, Nkandze, Makupulani, Mahumani, and Nkandze II in true Tjopiland are “*Va ka Langa*”.

On these Zulu invaders the writer hopes to be able to furnish more information later on.

In conclusion I might say that having thus given the historical data which are still available amongst Tjopi-speaking people, as well as their geographical distribution, I hope to be able to give some more information about their tongue and customs.

The ethnology of Gazaland and Tjopiland is still to be studied. It is a most interesting country resembling a cross-road of peoples. The student meets there Shangaan or Thonga people, some Valenge, many Vatsjopi, some Vatswa (in fact, an eccentric group of the Thonga tribe), some Vatonga or Vatoka of Inhambane, and numerous Vandzau. As to the proper situation of each of these elements, nothing clear has been written up to the present day.

These few notes of an inexperienced writer do not pretend to cope with such a considerable subject. But they will perhaps contribute to throw some light on this most interesting ethnological riddle, and help in the future the Tjopi people to remember something of its past, when the progress of white civilization and the threatening encroachment of the surrounding tribes shall have swept away all memories of the old people.

MAP OF TjOPILAND.

